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BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES
CONSIDERING THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2005

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Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, I thank you for the opportunity to present the 2005 budget request of the National Park Service.

Our nation's National Parks serve to unite people in a way that is distinctive and precious. Backpackers embarking on a hike into the Grand Canyon, school children enjoying an interpretive tour at Independence National Historical Park, and veterans visiting the Vietnam Veterans Memorial are all bound by their common exposure to and appreciation for the wonderful resources of the Park System. Since the National Park Service's inception in 1916, parks have continually served as a source of enjoyment, relaxation, and inspiration to visitors hailing from around the country and around the world. The FY 2005 budget request of \$2.4 billion in discretionary authority for the National Park Service reflects an increase of \$102 million (4.5 percent) above the FY 2004 enacted level. The proposed funding would aid in the preservation of park assets, ensure protection of park resources, and guarantee a safe and enjoyable visitor experience.

This budget proposal builds upon strong, continued commitments of park funding, with cumulative park base increases over the past three years totaling \$67 million. These funds have helped ensure high-quality visitor experiences, with visitor surveys in 2003 showing a 96% approval rating. Recent reports about park funding and operations are misleading. The park service, like all agencies, must constantly evaluate priorities and target funding to meet high-priority goals. The park service is also striving to make the best use of dollars through management improvements, including reductions in administrative costs and lower-priority activities. These efforts are a sign of good management practices that help ensure outstanding services to the visiting public. The Congress, the President, and Secretary Norton have all shown strong commitment to our National Parks. The park service appreciates that commitment and is working hard to constantly improve management to make sure these dollars are well spent.

The FY 2005 budget focuses on several key areas which are proposed for significant increases, including park operations, backlog maintenance, security, partnership programs, and resource management. Budget constraints also require offsets or reduced investments in several lower priority program areas.

Maintaining Park Operations

The National Park Service must continue to ensure that critical needs in our parks are being met. As a testament to this commitment, \$1.8 billion is requested in 2005 for park operations in the Operation of the National Park System and U.S. Park Police Appropriations. This represents an \$80 million, or 4.7 percent, increase over the FY 2004 enacted level. Another \$152 million is

available through recreation fees, primarily for backlog facility maintenance, which we propose to authorize permanently. The majority of funding within these Appropriations is provided directly to the park managers in the park base. Park base funding is vital because it enables the 387 park units in the National Park System to carry out their core mission responsibilities. A \$22 million increase for specific park base operations is requested in FY 2005 and would be aimed at addressing a number of important operating needs.

Increased funding is requested for responsibilities at new parks such as Flight 93 Memorial in Pennsylvania, Minuteman Missile National Historic Site in South Dakota, the future pedestrian friendly configuration of Pennsylvania Avenue near the White House, and the World War II Memorial on the National Mall. In addition, much of the park base increase would be directed towards increasing security and law enforcement in parks and providing the preventive maintenance necessary to sustain the gains made in our backlog reduction effort. Increases totaling \$4.7 million for law enforcement and security would be used to enhance security measures at icon parks such as the Statue of Liberty National Monument and the USS Arizona National Memorial. Proposed funding would also aid in protecting visitors and resources at border parks from illegal immigrants and drug traffickers using the parks as an entrance route into the United States. Equally important, a total of \$10.1 million of the proposed park base increase would be directed towards facility maintenance needs at parks with high-priority buildings targeted for condition improvement in FY 2004 and FY 2005.

Reducing the Maintenance Backlog

The aforementioned facility maintenance park increase is a critical part of our backlog maintenance effort. The FY 2005 budget proposal continues to provide strong support for the President's goal of investing \$4.9 billion over five years to improve National Park Service facilities and roads. For FY 2005, the Administration requests a total of \$1.1 billion to address the deferred maintenance backlog. This request represents a \$77.1 million increase over the FY 2004 enacted level and includes \$725 million in NPS appropriations, \$310 million for park roads within the Department of Transportation's Federal Lands Highway Program, and an estimated \$77.5 million in funding dedicated to maintenance from recreational fees. Park roads funding depends upon enactment of the Administration's proposed reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).

Out of the \$725 million NPS request for facility maintenance and construction, more than \$107 million would be directed towards the Repair and Rehabilitation Program. Under this program, a series of increases are requested, including \$3 million to establish funding dedicated for the demolition and removal of hazardous structures, \$2 million to augment the facility condition assessment process, and \$8.2 million for completion of an additional 40 repair/rehabilitation projects, such as replacing the water and sewer systems at Great Smoky Mountains National Park and restoring a portion of the Old Faithful Inn at Yellowstone National Park. A total of \$65.1 million is requested within our regional maintenance programs to perform preventive maintenance in parks, including \$10.2 million for cyclic maintenance for historic structures. Performing this preventive maintenance continues both the President's and this Committee's firm commitment to addressing the deferred maintenance backlog and preserving our Nation's treasures. A total of \$330 million is requested for construction, with the majority of funding, \$214 million, slated for Line-Item Construction projects that improve facility conditions.

The Facility Condition Assessment process is a particularly important component of managing the National Park Service's maintenance backlog. In an effort to refine budget estimates based on the actual conditions of park facilities, the Service has completed initial facility condition assessments at all but four parks. By the end of FY 2004, condition assessments will be completed at the four remaining parks: Yellowstone National Park, Appalachian National Scenic Trail, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and Gateway National Recreation Area. By assessing the condition of park facilities, completing critical repair/rehab projects, disposing of unsafe structures, performing preventive maintenance, and dedicating resources to improve park roads we ensure visitors have a safe and enjoyable park experience.

Enhancing Law Enforcement & Security

The FY 2005 budget proposal includes a request for \$12.4 million to strengthen law enforcement and security in the Park System. The proposed funding includes \$2.2 million to electronically monitor and analyze park safety using the Incident Management, Analysis, and Reporting System, \$1.2 million to support regional field investigators conducting investigations in multi-park clusters, \$300,000 to create a centralized law enforcement structure, \$2 million to provide support for the 2005 Presidential Inauguration, and \$2 million to augment the counter-terrorism abilities of the United States Park Police. As mentioned earlier, a portion of the law enforcement budget increase, \$4.7 million, is requested for park operations law enforcement.

Fostering Partnership Initiatives

Developing and sustaining partnerships is a valuable way to leverage NPS appropriations for the benefit of parks. The National Park Service continues to focus its efforts on building strong networks between parks and communities through several partnership initiatives, including the Challenge Cost-Share programs and Volunteers-in-Parks program. The FY 2005 budget proposal includes a \$21 million request for Challenge Cost-Share programs to increase the participation of neighboring communities and qualified partners in preserving and improving cultural, natural, and recreational resources by offering 50:50 matching grant opportunities to all National Park Service programs. The Cost-Share programs are an important part of the Secretary's 4 C's initiative to foster conservation through cooperation, consultation, and communication. The Traditional Challenge Cost-Share program would receive \$4 million more, doubling the regular funding and allowing roughly 100 additional projects to be generated through partnerships. The Resource Restoration Challenge Cost-Share program would receive \$12 million, a \$4.1 million increase over the FY 2004 enacted level, to address unfunded needs in the areas of natural resource restoration, habitat establishment, species protection, and ecosystem studies. The Lewis and Clark Challenge Cost-Share program would receive \$5 million to continue projects associated with the Bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. A request of \$2.4 million is proposed for FY 2005 to support the Volunteers-in-Parks (VIP) program, including a \$600,000 increase to support an expansion of the VIP program and enhance our ability to recruit and sustain highly qualified and skilled volunteers. It is estimated that there will be an increase of 2,000 volunteers in National Parks in 2004 and approximately 10,000 volunteers through 2009. In addition, a \$250,000 increase, building on \$500,000 provided in FY 2004, would be used to support full-time VIP/Partnership Coordinator positions in each of the seven regions to help direct and manage the increasing number of volunteer and partnership

projects. The effective use of volunteers can greatly help parks address various operational needs.

The National Park Service continues longstanding relationships with State, Territory and Tribal partners through the Historic Preservation Fund grant programs and with State and Territory partners through the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant program. Within the Historic Preservation Fund appropriation, the National Park Service is requesting \$78 million for FY 2005. This request includes \$38 million for Grants-in-Aid programs to support State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, \$30 million for Save America's Treasures, and \$10 million for a new program, Preserve America. The Save America's Treasures program addresses the urgent preservation needs of the nation's most significant historic sites and collections. Each grant requires a 50:50 match of non-Federal funds, which has stimulated contributions from states, localities, corporations, foundations, and individuals who value our shared heritage. Preserve America grants will support heritage tourism and complement Save America's Treasures grants by competitively awarding one-time assistance for communities initiating long-term approaches to using historic resources in an economically sustainable manner. The National Park Service also includes a request under Federal Land Acquisition for \$5 million to continue the Civil War Battlefield Preservation Grants program. A total of \$93.8 million (same level as last year) is requested for the Land and Water Conservation Fund State Conservation Program to provide matching grants to States, and through States, to local units of government for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities that provide public access to lands, waters, and other recreation resources. Through this partnership of the National Park Service with state and local governments, we are able to provide recreational opportunities and preserve these areas for future generations in a timely and cost-effective way.

Improving Resource Management Baseline Information for Decision Making

The NPS Natural Resource Challenge (NRC) continues to make progress towards its goal of developing a scientific base of knowledge about park resources. The NRC is an initiative that has (1) expanded existing inventory programs and developed efficient ways to monitor the vital signs of natural systems; (2) enlisted others in the scientific community to help, and (3) expanded natural resources preservation activities in parks. The FY 2005 budget proposal includes a \$4.6 million increase to allow for the monitoring of park vital signs in 28 of 32 multi-park networks and for the monitoring of water quality in all 32 multi-park networks. NPS vital signs monitoring provides park managers with key information on the status and trends in park ecosystem health; defines normal limits of variation in measurable features; provides early warning of situations that require management intervention; suggests remedial treatments and frames research hypotheses; and in some cases determines compliance with laws and regulations.

Other significant steps are also being taken to manage the natural resources of the South Florida ecosystems. As part of the FY 2005 budget proposal, a total of \$84 million is requested for the ongoing restoration of the Everglades ecosystem. Of this amount, \$25 million is proposed for park operations at Everglades National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, Biscayne National Park, and Dry Tortugas National Park, including a park base increase of \$789,000 for Everglades National Park. Funding of \$5.5 million is for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and \$3.9 million is for the Critical Ecosystems Studies Initiative (CESI). The funds would be used to support projects having significant effects on South Florida parks, including

feasibility studies, pilot projects for seepage management and in-ground reservoirs, and restoration projects. In addition, \$1.3 million is proposed for the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force which oversees this multi-agency effort. Within Land Acquisition, \$40 million would be used to acquire mineral rights at Big Cypress National Preserve. By obtaining these rights, the park will be able to prevent oil development and protect its fragile ecosystem. Funding of \$8 million is also requested for the ongoing project to modify the water delivery system to Everglades National Park. This project will help transform damaged and drained areas of the everglades ecosystem into diverse marshlands containing native flora and fauna.

Continuing Management Reform Actions

In an attempt to move towards greater levels of budget and performance accountability, the NPS continues to expand the use of the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), Activity-Based Costing, and Competitive Sourcing Reviews. Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) evaluations and recommendations continue to inform both budget formulation and program management decisions. For example, the Facilities Management program received an FY 2005 PART score of 67%, an increase of 26% over the FY 2004 PART score. This improvement reflects the progress made in developing industry standard measurements, the Asset Priority Index (API), and Facility Condition Index (FCI) for NPS asset classes. The NPS also continues to implement Activity-Based Costing to identify and track performance costs and use that information for management decisions. For example, the NPS used contractors for all treatments funded through the Exotic Plant Management Team (EPMT) program in Florida in FY 2003 when activity-based costing data showed it was more cost effective to use commercial sources rather than bureau sources for the plant treatments. Conversely, a competitive sourcing study at the NPS Southeast Archeological Center revealed that it is more cost effective to have Federal employees rather than contractors perform the work. Competitive reviews help maximize program efficiencies, often resulting in significant cost savings.

The NPS maintains its support for the Presidential Management Agenda and has requested over \$8 million in the FY 2005 budget for improving information technology (IT), financial accountability, and other management reforms. The budget proposal includes funding for an upgrade of the IT security infrastructure to enable the NPS to comply with requirements of the Federal Information Security Management Act, an IT certification and accreditation program (C&A) to provide mandated C&A for all major NPS applications and general support systems, and E-Government projects such as E-Training and E-Records Management. Improved financial performance is also a priority for the NPS, and this is reflected in budget requests for \$500,000 for a Servicewide Management Accountability Review and \$980,000 to support the annual financial audit.

A cornerstone of our FY 2005 budget request is a legislative proposal making permanent the authority for the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program, in which your committee has taken a crucial leadership role. The Fee Demonstration Program has proven to be a great benefit to parks. By coupling the targeted use of fee receipts, partnership initiatives and management reforms with critical appropriation priorities such as maintenance of park assets, law enforcement and security, and protection of resources, the NPS will be able to meet our core responsibilities of taking care of America's parks, monuments, and historic places. I thank you again for the opportunity to present our proposal for the FY 2005 budget for your consideration.